



# ISRAELI DANCE & MUSIC CONVENTION

VIRTUAL CULTURAL  
EVENT TO CELEBRATE  
YOM HA'ATZMAUT

**SUNDAY, APRIL 18 | [www.chai.ca](http://www.chai.ca)**

Interactive Workshops • Learning Events • Community Dance

For more information call: 204.477.7497



# WELCOME

The Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble, in partnership with the Rady JCC and Robyn Braha School of Dance, is thrilled to present its first Dance & Music Convention! In honour of Yom Ha'Atzmaut and the incredible contributions that Israel has made to the world of cultural arts, this full-day event will feature workshops with renown choreographers and musicians from around the world and here at home.

Whether you want to sign-up for a full day of virtual workshops or just attend one class, the symposium has something for everyone, from experienced young artists to those wanting to try their hands at something new.

In addition to the variety of choreography and music workshops, the event will also feature a Q&A with notable Chai alumni, as well as a very special community dance – Rikudei'Am – where participants of all ages and experience levels can join together in a shared love of folk arts.

In the spirit of inclusion, some workshops and talks are free of charge.

**David Vamos**, Artistic Director, Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble

**Rob Berkowits**, Executive Director, Rady Jewish Community Centre

**Robyn Braha**, Director, Beyachad, Robyn Braha School of Dance



David Vamos



Rob Berkowits



Robyn Braha

## REGISTRATION

> **[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER ONLINE](#)**

The registration form has 3 sections to fill out:

- contact information
- dance/music experience
- class selection

If you select any classes with fees, credit card information will be required. However you choose to enjoy Yom Ha'atzmaut, we hope you'll make the most of whatever interests you. At a later date prior to April 18, you will be sent individual zoom links to each session that you register for.

# SCHEDULE

## SUNDAY, APRIL 18

### Option 1

9:30 am  
–  
10:20 am

**Dance Warm-up** **FREE**  
Beginner, Intermediate &  
Advanced together  
**Kristina Frykas**

10:30 am  
–  
12:00 pm

**Contemporary Israeli Choreography** **\$15**  
Advanced  
**Shai Gottesman**  
from Israel

11:15 am  
–  
12:00 pm

**Lunch & Learn** **FREE**  
**Q&A with Tracy Kasner & Members of the Sommer Family**  
Open to all

1:00 pm  
–  
2:30 pm

**Flamenco Choreography** **\$15**  
Advanced  
**Rebeca Shamah**  
from Costa Rica

2:45 pm  
–  
3:45 pm

**Gaga Dance** **\$15**  
Advanced  
**Ana Harmon**  
from Boston

4:00 pm  
–  
5:00 pm

**Rikudei'am** **FREE**  
Open to all  
**Rachel Cooper**  
from Winnipeg

### Option 2

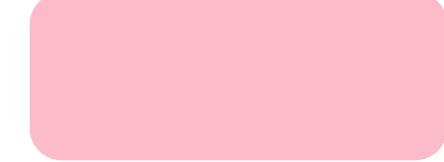


**Yemenite Israeli Choreography** **\$15**  
Intermediate  
**Memo Treistman**  
from Mexico City

**12:30 pm** **FREE**  
**Interactive Conversation with Elan Marchinko**  
Choreographer and writer  
from Washington State  
Open to all

**Contemporary Israeli Choreography** **\$15**  
Intermediate  
**Shai Gottesman**  
from Israel

**Klezmer Music Session** **FREE**  
All skill levels welcome  
**Jesse Popeski**  
from Winnipeg

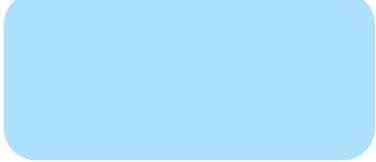
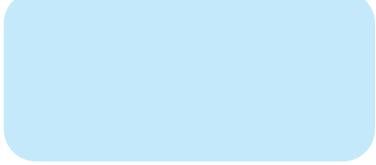
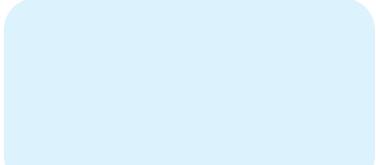


### Option 3



**10:30-11:15 am** **\$15**  
**Israeli Dance Fundamentals**  
Beginner  
**Gina Chodirkar**  
from Winnipeg

**Introduction to Israeli Song** **\$15**  
Open to all  
**Sarah Sommer**  
from Winnipeg



9:30-10:20 AM

# DANCE WARM-UP

## **KRISTINA FRYKAS**

FOR ALL LEVELS | **FREE**

Dancers will start the day with a classic ballet class, emphasizing technique and centring themselves for the day ahead.

**KRISTINA FRYKAS** is a graduate of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's Teacher Training Program and holds her Licentiate teaching designation with the Cecchetti Society of Canada and Cecchetti International Classical Ballet.

She is certified in Progressing Ballet Technique and Pilates. She has been artistic staff at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in the Recreational School and Professional School's Teacher Training Program for twenty years.

Kristina is a former board member of Dance Manitoba and was Manitoba Representative to the Cecchetti Society of Canada. Within the Ukrainian community, Kristina is the School Director of Sopilka Ukrainian Dance School. Under her direction the school has been recognized by the Manitoba Ukrainian Dance Festival as the top school in the province for three consecutive years.

She has received multiple awards for her choreography and was the recipient of the 2019-2020 Instructor of the Year Award presented by Ukrainian Dance World.



# CONTEMPORARY ISRAELI CHOREOGRAPHY

## SHAI GOTTESMAN

10:30 AM-12:00 PM

ADVANCED | \$15

Renown choreographer Shai Gottesman is a unique voice in Israeli dance, offering a contemporary fusion of modern ballet and folk dance styles. This workshop will explore one of his celebrated pieces, highlighting beautiful lines and intricate steps. It is recommended that participants have a minimum of 5-6 years classical dance training.



**SHAI GOTTESMAN** was born and raised in Kibbutz Afikim in the Jordan Valley, Israel. His career began at the age of 16 when he started to dance at the Folk Dance Company of the Jordan Valley. He went on to study at the Academy for Physical and Movement Education in Tel Aviv before taking his first professional dance position with the company of Jonathan Carmon in Jerusalem.

From 1982 until 1989 Shai enjoyed a long-term dance position with the Bat-Sheva Dance Company in Tel Aviv Israel. In 1990, Shai moved with his family to the Netherlands where he and his wife Marjolein established their own Dance Academy - The Flex Point Ballet Center, in The Hague. In 1995, the couple returned to Israel for Shai to take the acclaimed position of Artistic Director of Hora Jerusalem before becoming General Manager in 2003. In 2012 Shai founded Danceika, Dance & Music Productions where he acts as their Chief Director and Manager.

Throughout his career, Shai developed an international reputation as a teacher and choreographer with several dance companies including as a returning choreographer and mentor for Canada's Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble in Winnipeg.

Shai directed an entire show for the Holocaust Memorial Ceremony at the Ghetto Fighters House Amphitheater which welcomed the presence of Israel's President and the former President of Germany. For the last 6 years Shai was the Artistic Producer of the Jerusalem Marching Day, an Event that brings to the streets of Jerusalem 10,000 marchers.

Last summer, before all cultural activity in Israel was stopped following Covid-19, Shai put on a show, a duet of two dancers, a violinist and a singer, that tells the story of the survival of his mother and sister from the Holocaust. The show was produced by the Dance department of the Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv.

> REGISTER

# YEMENITE ISRAELI CHOREOGRAPHY

## MEMO TREISTMAN

10:30 AM-12:00 PM

INTERMEDIATE | \$15

The dance that we will prepare, will be a choreographic exercise in real time. Our hands and the upper part of our body will become symbols of one of the most important migrations that the state of Israel has had since it was created: The Jewish-Yemenite migration.

**GUILLERMO TREISTMAN** has a degree in Communication Sciences with a Master's Degree in Human Development from the Universidad Iberoamericana.

He has been a professor of Scenic Communication, Communication Workshop for Engineering and Entertainment Production II at the Universidad Iberoamericana since 2004.

Later, he studied Art History in Florence, Italy and trained in courses in the history of dance, musical rhythm, theater, acting, lighting, choreography and stage direction. He was a choreographer, in Venezuela, Guatemala, Cuba, Uruguay, Israel, Canada and the United States, among other countries.

- Choreographic Director of the Jewish Dance Company, Anajnu Veatem, 1985 - 2003
- General Director and Choreographer of the Maagal CDI Dance Group, 1984 - 1998
- Artistic Director of the Israelite Sports Center, 1990 - 2001
- General Director of the Aviv Carlos Halpert Festival of Jewish Dance, 1991 - 2000

In 1997 and 2001 he studied at the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico (ITAM) and at the end of 2003 he created a company that produces productions of corporate and institutional events, as well as creative pieces of video communication of a business, institutional and social nature.



# ISRAELI DANCE FUNDAMENTALS **GINA CHODIRKER**

10:30-11:15 AM

**BEGINNER | \$15**

This session will focus on beginner Israeli dance steps and combinations and teach some very easy Israeli folk dances. All ages and skill levels are welcome. The perfect activity for families on a Sunday morning!

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**GINA CHODIRKER** began to learn Israeli folk dancing in the fall of 1996 and started to teach it in December 2004. She has traveled to workshops in Miami, Chicago, Palm Springs and Toronto to learn new dances, directly from guest Israeli choreographers. Pre-pandemic, Gina led a weekly drop-in Israeli folkdance session at the Rady Jewish Community Centre.



# INTRODUCTION TO ISRAELI SONG **SARAH SOMMER**

11:15 AM-12:00 PM

ALL LEVELS | \$15

This interactive session will include a brief overview of Israeli vocal music, Hebrew language pronunciation, and a song tutorial. This workshop is geared to all ages and levels, whether you are already a lover of Israeli songs or would like to learn about their cultural impact on the Jews of Israel and the diaspora.

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**SARAH SOMMER** is an active choral conductor, vocalist and music educator in Winnipeg. She completed her Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Education in June 2017 from the University of Manitoba, and is currently teaching music at Brock Corydon School. Sarah also teaches music lessons from her private studio. She has appeared as choir member and soloist with many local ensembles, including Canzona, Camerata Nova, the Winnipeg Singers, and the Shaarey Zedek Quartet.



Sarah is the co-founder and co-artistic director of NUOVOCE, Winnipeg's newest chamber choir. Sarah's other directing credits include: the Chai Folk Ensemble (vocal director, 2011-2017), Kolot Community Voices (co-founder and director, 2015/16), Winnipeg School Division Honour Choir (guest conductor, 2017/18), and Louis Riel School Division Intermediate Choir (guest conductor, Choral Celebrations, 2019), Winnipeg Girls' Choir (current assistant conductor) and the Etz Chayim Synagogue Choir (current director). Currently, Sarah is completing her Post Baccalaureate Diploma in Vocal Performance under the tutelage of Tracy Dahl.

# LUNCH & LEARN – Q&A WITH **TRACY KASNER & MEMBERS OF THE SOMMER FAMILY**

12:00-1:00 PM

OPEN TO ALL | **FREE**

When the late Sarah Sommer founded the Chai Folk Ensemble in 1964, she had no idea the impact the group would have on Winnipeg's Jewish community decades later. Join Sarah's children, Hillel and Reena, along with Chai board president Tracy Kasner, as they share the history and significance of Chai throughout the generations. This program is open to all, regardless of participation in other workshops.



**If you have any questions for the Q&A,  
email them by April 16 to: [info@chai.ca](mailto:info@chai.ca)**

12:30-1:00 PM

## INTERACTIVE CONVERSATION WITH **ELAN MARCHINKO**

OPEN TO ALL DANCERS | **FREE**

A conversation on how dancing at home together shifts your practice and helps to maintain your well-being. Open to all dancers.

**ELAN MARCHINKO** is a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholar and PhD Candidate in Theatre and Performance Studies at York University (Toronto). Her experiences as a dance director and choreographer with the Chai Folk Ensemble continue to inspire her research on intercultural performance and public memory. Elan's dissertation project examines Canadian colonial violence staged through Indigenous led dance, theatre, and opera. She has been an embedded performance researcher with Toronto based companies Signal Theatre, founded by Michael Greyeyes (Plains Cree), and ParaSoul Dance led by Chai alumnus Farrah Fernando. Elan's writing has been featured in InTensions Online Journal, Canadian Theatre Review, The Dance Current, and the edited collection Remembering Air India: The Art of Public Mourning. She is currently a participant in the 2020-2021 Certamen Artist Development Program with Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana in New York City.



# FLAMENCO

## REBECA SHAMAH

1:00-2:30 PM

ADVANCED | \$15

This session will focus on the basic elements of flamenco and the technique of zapateado. Dancers will receive instruction on introductory hand, arm and body movements, as well as foundational steps of tango/flamenco-style choreography. No previous flamenco experience required.

**REBECA SHAMAH** was born in Mexico City, where she graduated from the Escuela Nacional de danza Nellie y Gloria Campobello (The National Institute of Beauty Arts) with a degree in Spanish dance and also from the Iberoamerican University with a degree in Philosophy. She won a scholarship from the summer intensive program in Ballet Hispanico in NY, and she took flamenco lessons in Spain with famous flamenco dancers. As a choreographer, she was the director of Anajnu Veatem, Jewish Dance Company in Mexico (2011-2016), and she worked for the Escuela Nacional de danza Nellie y Gloria Campobello (The National Institute of Beauty Arts) as a guest choreographer in 2015. Since 2008 she is a choreographer for the Festival Aviv in México, presenting choreographies of modern and folk dance.

As a dancer she performed in Memoria muscular (muscle memory, contemporary dance company). Rebeca now lives in Costa Rica, and has her flamenco dance academy, Flamenco Rebeca Shamah, Her academy is certified by the EFA (the Andalucía flamenco school , and also she is a dancer in El tablao flamenco in Costa Rica, dancing once a week with live music.

Rebeca has created two choreographies for the Chai Folk Ensemble.



1:00-2:30 PM

# CHOREO **SHAI GOTTESMAN**

**INTERMEDIATE | \$15**

This workshop will explore one of his celebrated pieces, highlighting beautiful lines and intricate steps, and will be specially tailored to intermediate level dancers. It is recommended that participants have a minimum of 3-4 years classical dance training.

**SHAI GOTTESMAN** was born and raised in Kibbutz Afikim in the Jordan Valley, Israel. His career began at the age of 16 when he started to dance at the Folk Dance Company of the Jordan Valley. He went on to study at the Academy for Physical and Movement Education in Tel Aviv before taking his first professional dance position with the company of Jonathan Carmon in Jerusalem.

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2:45-3:45 PM

# GAGA DANCE ANA HARMON

ADVANCED | \$15



Gaga/dancers deepens dancers' awareness of physical sensations, expands their palette of available movement options, enhances their ability to modulate their energy and engage their explosive power, and enriches their movement quality with a wide range of textures.

**Class is limited to 30 participants.**

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**ANA HARMON** is a dancer and arts advocate living in Tel Aviv since 2010. Born in Boston in 1988, Ana attended Boston Latin High School while training with Boston Ballet's pre-professional program, before joining Ballet Austin II in 2008. After completing MASA Dance Journey on Kibbutz Ga'aton in 2010, she joined Kamea Dance Company in Beer Sheva where she danced for three years, touring across Israel and internationally. Ana received a BA Summa Cum Laude in Liberal Arts from Tel Aviv University in 2016. From 2016-2018 she worked for Batsheva Dance Company's International Development department. Today Ana is the International Project Manager for Gaga Movement Research and is a certified Gaga teacher. She is the 2019 awardee of the Yuri Stern Prize for Dance.

# KLEZMER MUSIC SESSION

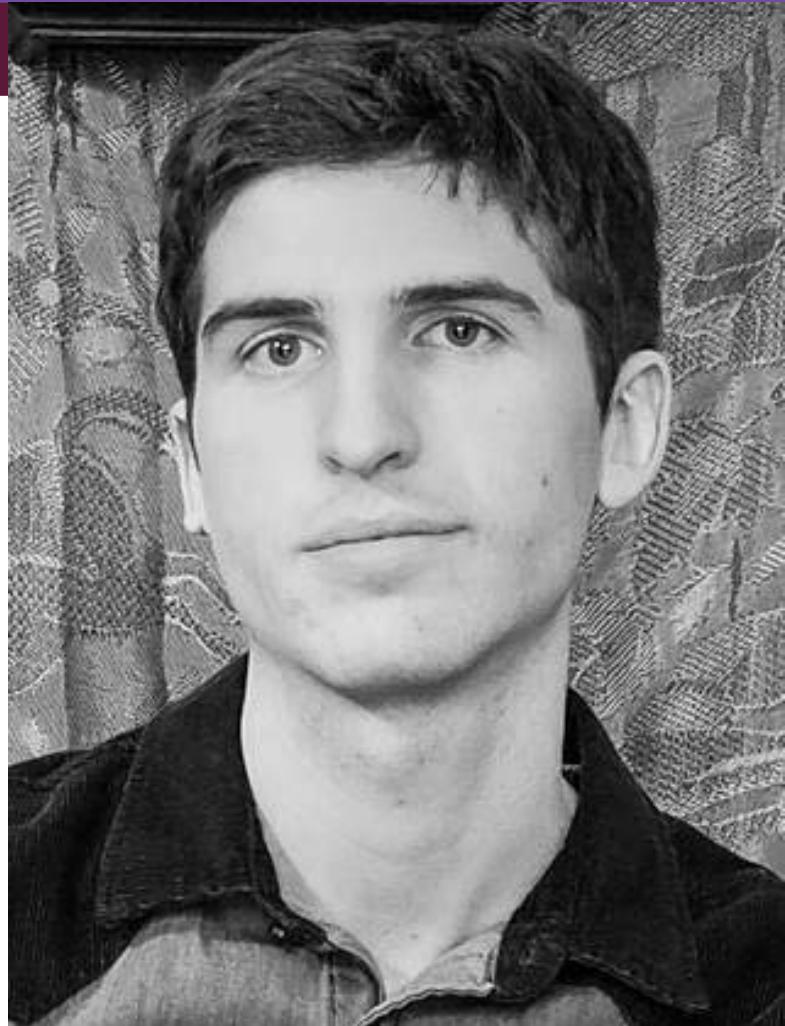
## JESSE POPESKI

2:45 - 3:45 PM

ALL LEVELS | **FREE**

Klezmer is the instrumental Yiddish Folk music of Eastern Europe. Join us as we travel back in time to a shtetl in the 19th century, where a wedding is about to take place. In this workshop, we will explore examples of the different styles of Klezmer music through its role in a wedding ceremony, with demonstrations from the musicians of the Chai Folk Ensemble band. For musicians interested in understanding how music relates to ceremony, ritual, and life, or for anyone interested in this unique tradition of Jewish and European history, this workshop will be a great introduction to the colourful world of Klezmer music!

While the workshop is geared towards musicians, all who are interested in Klezmer music and would like to listen to the history and the music being created, are welcome to attend.



**JESSE POPESKI** is guitarist from Winnipeg. He received his Bachelor of Music degree (with a focus on Jazz Studies) at the University of Manitoba. Jesse teaches music, performs with a variety of groups locally, and tours across Canada with the unique Folk trio Casati. He has been involved with the Chai Folk Ensemble since 2015 and is currently the music director.

4:00 - 5:00 PM

## RIKUDEI'AM **RACHEL COOPER**

OPEN TO ALL | **FREE**

"Rikudei'Am" is a form of dance usually performed to Hebrew songs which have been popular in Israel, with dances choreographed for each specific song. In a Chai first, we have created a basic folk dance to be enjoyed by all, regardless of age and ability. Whether you're a pro or a novice, this will be a fun, easy way of ending our day all together!

**RACHEL COOPER** is an independent dancer, choreographer, and teacher. She is a graduate of the Senior Professional Program of the School of Contemporary Dancers, and holds a B.A. Honours in Theatre and Drama/Dance and a Bachelor of Education both from the University of Winnipeg, and was awarded the University's gold medal for her studies. Rachel began her professional career in Toronto performing with Tilt Sound and Motion. She has a strong foundation in many dance disciplines - modern, ballet, jazz, tap, and hip hop and has had the opportunity to work with a wide range of choreographers in various styles of dance. Rachel is on staff at The Royal Winnipeg Ballet School, The School of Contemporary Dancers, and is the director of the Maples Collegiate Dance Department. Her choreography has appeared and been awarded on both local and international stages. Rachel continues to attend professional development workshops to further her growth and progress as a dancer and dance educator.

